

## POETRY

**Abdulrazaq Godwin Omeiza**

*Et tu, Brute?*

Et tu, Brute?  
Was it always in you,  
the quiet knife you hid behind your smile?  
I never thought I'd find your hand at my back  
when I had only ever offered you my chest.

I told you first,  
before the world knew,  
before the titles meant anything.  
I came with open hands,  
with trust trembling in my throat,  
saying:  
"Brother, I'm stepping forward. Are we still alright?"  
And you said,  
"Yes."  
But your eyes must have known  
what your heart wouldn't speak.

How quickly warmth became distance.  
How suddenly you found new footsteps  
to echo beside,  
walking with the one I once called home...  
replacing me,  
without words,  
without warning.

You told the story,  
but never the full truth.  
You made me the shadow  
while you stood in the sun,  
and I?  
I was left explaining my silence  
to the man who once saw me as more.

You didn't have to betray me.  
All I wanted  
was enough space for both of us to rise.  
But you turned our brotherhood  
into a battlefield  
without ever drawing a sword.

What hurts  
isn't that you wanted the crown.  
It's that you wore your friendship  
like a borrowed robe,  
ready to drop it  
the moment it no longer fit your ambition.

You saw me weep in silence,  
and never reached for me.  
You watched my walls collapse,  
and chose instead  
to smile with the one  
I was mourning distance from.

No shoulder.  
No word.  
No "Are you okay?"

And now I sit with the echo of your silence,  
the ghost of what we were,  
and I wonder,  
was I ever your brother?  
Or just a name on a list  
you needed to cross out  
on your way to the top?

Et tu, Brute?  
I would have carried your victories  
like my own.  
But you chose to climb  
over the place where my trust once stood.

### Author's Note



**Abdulrazaq Godwin Omeiza** is a 17-year-old Nigerian poet, spoken word artist, and student advocate based in Ibadan, Oyo State. A Grade 11 student at Government College Ibadan, his work explores themes of justice, courage, identity, and human rights. He was the winner of the 2025 Wale Okediran at 70 National Poetry Competition. He also recently placed second in a continental story writing competition entitled the "Wakini Kuria Prize for Children's Literature" and placed in the top 5 of the "African Teen Writers Award." Passionate about education and youth empowerment, Abdulrazaq uses his voice to spark reform, inspire awareness, and leave lasting impressions through raw, purposeful storytelling.